

*Memorandum on Coins of the Sunga Dynasty.*—By H. RIVETT-CARNAC, ESQ., C. S., C. I. E., F. S. A.

(With three Plates.)

I have to offer a few remarks on some more coins of the Sunga Dynasty submitted for the inspection of the Society.

Plate VII, No. 1 is a coin of quite a different type from those already sent. Mr. Carlleyle reads the inscription on it as *Ramadata*.

No. 2, A and B are 2 small coins with the legend *Achya* or *Bhanyā*. (Mr. Carlleyle.) On the other side is what looks like the Buddhist wheel.

No. 3. The legend on this coin of *Bhanu Mitra* corresponds with that on the large coins already submitted to the Society and described by Mr. Carlleyle. The shape of the coin is, however, different, and a figure which Mr. Carlleyle takes for the Nirvána has been stamped in above the legend. There may, however, perhaps be some doubt whether this is intended for a recumbent figure of Buddha. It looks indeed more like a standing female figure on a low platform, a figure somewhat resembling that on the coin of Phaguni Mitra to be noticed later.

No. 4 is a similar coin. The legend not being in quite such good preservation.

No. 5 is a coin of *Agi* or *Agni Mitra* of the same type. In this specimen, however, the figure would seem to be that of a female, the bosoms being distinctly shewn. It is not unlike the rough representation on the Kanauj series of coins, see Plate XXIV, Vol. I, Prinsep.

No. 6, A, B, C are 3 small coins of the same type. The figures are distinct enough, but the inscription in each case is undecipherable.\*

I have already sent to the Society, in illustration of Mr. Carlleyle's paper, specimens of each of the various coins of the Sunga Dynasty. The specimens sent were specially selected on account of the legend and the marks stamped on the obverse. The design on the reverse is hardly of so much importance, but it may be interesting to notice the Monogram or device chosen by each king. From a large number of specimens I have selected those now sent to illustrate as far as possible these points. Unfortunately none of the specimens are in very good preservation. The coins when found looked most hopeless. (See No. 7 specimen in its original condition now sent.) But by a careful process of boiling and cleaning the legends and stamps on the reverse have been rendered sufficiently clear.

\* [They are probably coins of *Súrya Mitra*. On No. 6 B, the letters *s*, *y*, *m*, and on No. 6 A, the letter *s* can be distinguished. ED.]

It is a curious fact that in hardly any case has it been possible to preserve the design on the reverse. Under the process of cleaning, what I may call the back of the coin has almost invariably flaked away. And this will hardly be wondered at when the condition in which the coins were originally found is seen.

The devices of the different monarchs may be noticed as follows:

*Bhumi Mitra.* The coins of this king, besides being very numerous, are nearly all in fairly good preservation. The device on the reverse is distinct. A standing figure on a platform, between two poles or pillars of victory, or whatever they may be called, each staff surmounted by three cross-bars, and the head surrounded by rays or flames. In the specimen No. 8 the figure holds what looks like a snake in its hand. The snake or line is not so distinct in all the coins (see Nos. 9, 10).

*Agi or Agni Mitra.* The coins numbered Nos. 11, 12 in Plate VIII bear nearly the same device as those of *Bhumi Mitra*. And of this king also it is to be noticed, that the coins, besides being numerous, are, comparatively speaking, in excellent preservation. Here also is a figure with rays or flames issuing from the head. This figure also stands on a platform between poles or staffs of victory. But in this case each staff is surmounted by what looks like a thistle or a *ghara*, whereas in *Bhumi Mitra's* coins at the summit of each staff are, as already noticed, three cross-bars. The smaller of *Agni Mitra*, Nos. 13, 14, 15, exhibit a different device. The standing figure has in its hand what would seem to be a snake. There are no square platform and no side poles. At the base are rays or flames.\* In fact the device is nearly the same as that on the coins of *Phaguni Mitra* now to be noticed.

*Phaguni Mitra*, Nos. 16, 17, 18, 19. These coins also are numerous and fairly well preserved. The device shews a standing female figure surrounded by what look like rays or flames.\* In the right hand is a club (?), lower down and also on the right side a device or monogram is clearly distinguishable.

The coins of *Bhadrachosa*, *Surya Mitra* and *Bhanu Mitra*, which, together with *Phaguni Mitra*, are, I understand, not only new coins, but also record the names of kings hitherto unknown, are much less numerous than those first noticed and are not generally in such a good state of preservation as those of *Bhumi*, *Agni* and *Phaguni*. Those of *Bhadrachosa* indeed are in most cases scarcely legible. And had it not been for the beautiful little specimen which came into my hands before the find in Bareilly, there might have been some difficulty at first in establishing the legend on these

\* [The base rather resembles the lotus-seat on the reverse of some Gupta coins. Ed.]

coins. Not one single specimen shows, with any distinctness, the design on the reverse. Two of the best in this respect that I have, are marked Nos. 20, 21. On these a female figure, resembling that on the coins of *Phaguni Mitra* can just be made out.

*Bhanu Mitra.* The device on Nos. 22, 23 is tolerably clear. The sun with pointed rays surmounts a semicircle which may be intended to represent a serpent. Below is what may be taken for a squat figure supporting the sun (?) but the device is perhaps hardly sufficiently distinct to admit of any very satisfactory conclusion being drawn. This may possibly be aided by coins of other types in the possession of the Society or figured in books which are not at my disposal.

*Surya Mitra*, Nos. 24, 25. Here, as the name denotes, is the sun surmounting what would seem to be a triangular-shaped altar with the staff of victory on either side. Here also the staff has the cross-bars as in *Bhumi Mitra's* coins.

To these I have added a coin of *Indra Mitra*, No. 26, similar to those already sent. This coin has I believe been found before. The device on the reverse is somewhat different from those already noticed, and shows a standing figure on a square platform, like that on the coins of *Bhumi* and *Agni Mitra*. In the right hand of the figure is a sceptre? The Staff of Victory noticed in the other coins is wanting here.

It will be seen that of the seven kings whose coins are noticed above, six of them adopted a different device. As regards the coins of *Bhadraghosa*, it is not possible to speak with certainty. It will be noticed too that these six *Mitras* have all included the sun, or the rays of the sun on their coins, suggesting possibly their *Mitra* or *Mithraic* origin. The symbols on the obverse of the coins have been described by Mr. Carlleyle, and in all cases the design is the same or nearly the same. There is little or no difference in the shape of the letters used. The legend is surmounted by three symbols which are in all cases the same, although in the coins of *Bhadraghosa* and *Bhanu Mitra* the central symbol appears to have been punched in separately. All this would seem to suggest that these seven kings belong to the same dynasty. Mr. Carlleyle has attributed them to the Sunga kings, who, according to Prinsep and other authorities, commenced to reign over Magadha about 172 B. C.

I shall be glad if the Society can afford me any information regarding these kings—the succession in which they reigned and the probable dates of the coins.

In Prinsep's list *Agni Mitra* appears next after *Pushpa Mitra* the first of the line. And this arrangement coincides with that given by Wilford and others in the *Asiatic Researches*. If the condition of the coin and the quantity in which it is found are of any significance, then *Agni*

*Mitra* might fairly be supposed to be one of the most recent of these kings.

I have no suggestions to offer regarding any of them, save *Bhadraghosa*. It will be seen from Prinsep's list and also from Wilford's Essay in Asiatic Researches, Vol. XI, that one *Ghosa Vasu* preceded *Vajra Mitra*. Regarding this *Vajra Mitra*, Wilford in his Essay on Vikramaditya and Salivahana (see Asiatic Researches, Vol. IX, page 145,) writes as follows: "The first Vicramáditya is mentioned in the Cumáricá-c'handa; in which it is declared that after 3020 years of the Cali-yuga had elapsed, then would Vicramárca appear. He reigned fourteen years, and of course died in the year 3034, when the era of Yudhishtir ended and his own began. In the list of the kings, who were to appear in the Cali-yuga, to be found in the Bhágavata, Brahmánda, Váyu and Vishnu Puránas, there are two kings, the seventeenth and eighteenth in regular succession from Chandragupta, who reigned seven years each. The first is called *Vicrama*, and the other *Mitra*; and they are supposed to have been originally meant for *Vicrama mitra* who, according to some, reigned fourteen years; and in these lists, the father, or predecessor of *Vicrama*, is called *Ghosha Rája* or the king of thickets, which is another name for Gandharupa, or Gadhá-rája in the west. This looks like an interpolation; and the more so, as it will appear hereafter, that *Ghosha-Rája* died in the year 440 of our Era."

The *Vajra Mitra* of Prinsep's list is here supposed to be *Vikrama Mitra* or *Vikramáditya*, whose father and predecessor is *Ghosa Rája*. Wilford thinks that this name *Ghosa* looks like an interpolation. But perhaps the discovery of a coin belonging to this period, bearing the name of *Ghosa*, may help to establish the correctness of the entry?

It is perhaps also worthy of notice that Prinsep's list of the Kanva Dynasty gives the name *Bhumi Mitra*, a contemporary of *Vikramáditya*. The coins of *Bhumi Mitra* and *Bhadraghosa* are certainly of about the same period, and possibly of the same dynasty. I am aware that since Wilford and Prinsep wrote, Mr. Thomas, General Cunningham and others have done much to clear up the doubts existing in respect to early Hindú Chronology. I am in hopes that those who are better informed than myself on the subject may be able to draw some practical conclusion from the coins which I have been able to collect.

I may add that the mass of them have now been tolerably well cleaned. They have been carefully examined and read by Mr. Carlleyle and myself, but no new types save those sent to the Society have been found. They are entirely at the disposal of the Society if they wish to see them, and I hope that a complete set may be accepted for the Society's Museum. The only reservation I have to make is, that a complete selection of the best specimens should be reserved for the British Museum, which Institution ought, I think, to have the first choice.





COINS OF THE MĀTRA OR SUNGA DYNASTY



